

News

For Immediate Release

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

*"Helping You
Help The Land"*

COLUMBIA, MO -- Missouri farmers and ranchers have until June 11 to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and be considered for the next round of funding.

Authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, CSP offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial forestland. CSP is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It offers payments for adding conservation practices and maintaining and managing existing conservation practices.

This is the second CSP funding and ranking period. During the first period earlier this year, Missouri NRCS approved about 1,000 contracts, including all 240 pertaining to private forest land. The 1,000 contracts cover about 500,000 acres at a cost of \$8.2 million.

Under the interim final rule published in July 2009, eligible producers may submit applications to enroll eligible land in CSP on a continuous basis. But only those received by June 11 will be considered during the next funding and ranking period.

"I encourage Missouri farmers and ranchers to apply for CSP now to ensure that their applications will be considered for the next round of funding," State Conservationist J.R. Flores said. "Applying is not a commitment to participating. Applicants can make their final decisions to participate in the program once the CSP final rule is issued."

The final rule will establish the policies and procedures for the program.

Flores encourages applicants to use the CSP self-screening checklist to determine if the new program is suitable for their operations. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offices or on the NRCS Web site at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.

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